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Did it ever occur to the Cobden messenger boys who deride the "Chinese wall policy" that China has accomplished a feat that no other civilization ever achieved—that she has maintained her national unity for over 35 centuries at least, and has seen all the classical civilization rise, fall, and disappear? Wong Chin Foo, may be, could turn this sneer at the citizens of a nation whose wisest men failed to form a union that could last for one hundred years. For, as one of your contributors has well remarked, *this Union is not the Union of the Fathers, but the Union of the Boys in Blue.* The amendments, while they nominally corrected and certainly improved the old Constitution, in point of fact established a new Union.

JOHN BALL, JR.

## VII.

### PERENNIAL EATING HOUSES.

ONE of the most perplexing minor questions of personal conduct that confront dwellers in great cities is in regard to sidewalk charity. Every well-dressed man or woman is perpetually asked for a few cents to aid a hungry or thirsty fellow mortal, and all the world knows that alms so bestowed are, as a rule, misapplied. The organized bureaus of charity have done much to correct abuses in this direction, but they do not as yet meet all the difficulties in the case. One may give a ticket to an applicant, but unless he accompanies it with a car fare the hungry man or woman may have to walk miles before reaching the bureau, and cannot, even then, count upon immediate relief. In this city there are several establishments which issue meal tickets, but they are widely scattered, and the tickets issued by one are not received at the others. Most of them, moreover, are closed at a comparatively early hour in the evening, and the needy are rather more likely to ask for aid under cover of darkness than during business hours. It affords small satisfaction to a soft-hearted soul when he turns away an apparently hungry beggar with a ticket that is not available until after seven o'clock the next morning. Almost every one, probably, solves the problem in the easiest way, and gives money when the case really seems urgent.

Now, it seems to me that there is a comparatively simple way of meeting the necessities of the case, and of establishing at the same time a class of eating-houses that will be in most cases self-supporting or even profitable. Some one of them will be within easy walking distance of any part of the city, and all of them will be available at any and all hours, not only for the needy but for unprotected women, and for strangers who know not where to go. In every large city the police stations are located each in its own district, and they are rarely more than a mile apart. They are open all day and all night. They are already provided with sleeping quarters for the homeless, and they are usually in a region which would be pretty sure to afford sooner or later a class of regular customers. The policemen themselves would probably contribute largely to the support of a plain, cleanly restaurant established close at hand, where good food could be obtained at the lowest possible rate. The proximity of the police station is an important feature of this plan, for it assumes immunity from disorder or violence, and the eating-houses might safely be intrusted to women, so easily might aid be summoned in case of need. Naturally the meal-ticket system would be adopted for the charitable part of the work. The tickets would be available at any and all of the stations, and if a percentage of them were worn out, thrown away, or never used, so much the better for the profit and loss account. It is quite possible that some such plan as this has been suggested before, but I am not aware that the important feature of all-night service has been considered in its special relations to the police precincts. Of course the adjustment of tours of duty for

the attendants would be arranged somewhat after the order of "watches" on shipboard, and experience would soon indicate the hours at which calls would be made, and their average number in any given locality. Under judicious administration, it would seem that such a system could be made self-supporting almost at once, and perhaps lodging rooms and other needed ameliorations of city life might follow in due course. As an evidence of what can be done in an out-of-the-way locality, I may specify the New York Fruit and Flower Mission, which has a large restaurant just across the way from Bellevue Hospital, at the foot of East Twenty-sixth street. It is such a model of cleanliness and good order, although frequented by all sorts of rough characters, that the hospital attendants, doctors, nurses and the rest find it a most acceptable resort, while the prices are so moderate, and the bill of fare so excellent, that even an habitué of Delmonico's might be temporarily reformed if he could be induced to pay the place a visit.

THOMAS CARY PITKIN.

### VIII.

#### "LEARNING TO WRITE ENGLISH."

THE school-master is willing to learn. No class of people interests and disappoints him more than the self-constituted advisers, who, from the outside, delight in telling him how and how not to teach.

If school-masters should set about advising railroad magnates, bankers and second-hand dealers how to manage their business, and should undertake to instruct lawyers, doctors and literary people how to follow their professions, we might be able to afford some interesting reading, make ourselves ridiculous and call forth unlimited indignation. We would probably hear something about the traditional "shoe-maker sticking to his last," and be reminded in forcible terms to confine our genius to our own affairs. Being docile, and having a little of that rare commodity called sense of propriety, and endowed with an appreciation of the ludicrous, we do not retaliate.

The critics of public school methods of instruction usually have a small but useful idea to promulgate; a little logic and much flourish of rhetorical trumpets. To give striking effects to their invectives they indulge in lurid statements that originate in a misconception of the facts, immature judgment or in a disordered, imagination. To accept these criticisms as true to the facts would brand the teachers of this country as imbeciles, as densely stupid and persistently ignorant of the demands of their calling.

In the May REVIEW is a caustic article under the title standing at the head of this communication. Doubtless it is conclusive to the writer. The other side is entitled a hearing. The contributor asserts that a "thing, the simplest in the world, which is entirely neglected in our public schools," is spelling at dictation. The educational value of writing to dictation, so clearly and logically stated by the author, is recognized by teachers everywhere. Every educational paper for ten years has been full of devices, exercises and directions for dictation spelling; every respectable course of study, every work on the science of pedagogy, every school report emphasizes the importance of this line of work.

When your contributor asserts "It is the reading-book, not the spelling-book, that should be used to learn to spell," he reiterates an error once popular but long since exploded. A few years ago a crusade against the spelling-book swept over this country. For some time teachers, superintendents and boards of education worried along without it. All sorts of expedients were employed. Partisan friends of the movement watched eagerly for the results that they had predicted.